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New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 104 (*continued*)

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Special high-level meeting on transnational organized crime

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to welcome Their Excellencies the Minister of Justice of Italy, the Secretary of State for Prisons and Prison Reform of France, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the Minister of the Interior of Chile, the Minister of the Interior, Public Security, Immigration and Decentralization of Gabon, the Minister of the Interior, Police and Public Security of Costa Rica, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan, the Vice Minister of Foreign Relations, Integration and Economic Affairs of El Salvador, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States of America and the Deputy Foreign Minister and Permanent Representative to the United Nations of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as the other representatives of Member States who are attending this meeting.

I should now like to turn to some organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the high-level meeting on transnational organized crime.

In view of the large number of delegations inscribed on the list, unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to close the list of speakers.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): With respect to the length of statements, in order to accommodate all the speakers inscribed on the list, speakers are encouraged to be as brief as possible, on the understanding that this will not preclude the distribution of more extensive texts. In view of the large number of delegations already inscribed on the list of speakers — and there are 50 so far — I appeal to speakers to cooperate in this respect.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Angelino Alfano, Minister of Justice of Italy.

Mr. Alfano (Italy): I would like to begin by expressing my deep personal gratitude to General Assembly President Treki for his moving tribute to my nation's late Judge Giovanni Falcone, whose dedication and courage are an inspiration to us all. My sincere thanks go also to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the attention with which he has followed the preparations for this high-level event on the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; to the Government of Mexico, which shares this initiative with Italy; and to the many like-minded States parties that have contributed to this meeting.

Let me stress that Italy fully endorses the statement that will be delivered by Ambassador Yañez-Barnuevo on behalf of the European Union.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

We are all very aware of the fact that the post-cold-war world has not reaped all the benefits that were expected. If we were to ask ourselves whether we are more secure today than we were 20 years ago, I believe that very few of us could answer yes. We see today many areas of instability, as well as a rise in transnational and non-conventional threats. Over the past 15 years, there has been a growing decentralization of technological, economic, financial and criminal power hubs, and therefore a wider diffusion of powers. New regional, subregional and non-State actors have emerged and claimed a role.

Today, we are confronted by creative criminals who use powerful and elusive means. It is therefore up to us to come up with a highly creative response. We are facing a global challenge that requires global intelligence, global commitment and a global response. Its sophistication is unprecedented, since it combines a growing number of strategic, economic, social and even climatic factors. Accordingly, we need to constantly update our policies.

On the rapidly changing geopolitical scene, the local dimension has become increasingly global, and vice versa, with international cooperation inevitably having to cover every aspect of social life. Our vision is to promote effective multilateralism, conceived not as an alternative solution, but as an extra lever to enhance both bilateral and regional partnerships.

Over the past 20 years, Italy has consistently supported the various United Nations bodies engaged in promoting common international approaches to fighting organized crime. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption are key elements that cannot be ignored, as are other instruments related to the fight against terrorism.

The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was opened for signature at Palermo in December 2000. It draws on the work and ideas of Judge Falcone, who, together with his wife and bodyguards, was brutally murdered by the Mafia in 1992 while performing his duties. One of the basic aims of the Convention is to use judicial and police cooperation to fight the financial and money laundering activities of international criminal associations anywhere in the world, regardless of the type of trafficking.

The underlying concept is simple: an arrest is often less effective than large-scale action to seize and recover the illicit assets of the Mafia. Giovanni Falcone had gained a deep understanding of the Mafia psychology. He was one of the first to understand that Mafiosi can handle arrests, considering them as a sort of business risk. They can only be truly defeated when justice deprives them and their families of the illegal proceeds stemming from their criminal activities.

In the past two years, Italy has adopted that approach to fighting organized crime by extending the power to seize the illegal assets of Mafia members, including heirs and family members, issuing guidelines on the seizure of cash and property to minimize the possibility of concealing Mafia assets and establishing criminal liability for legal persons in cases of money laundering. Thanks to those new provisions, which have attracted the interest of our international partners, Italy was able to set up a fund for the justice sector to pool the money and assets recovered from the Mafia. The fund is proving to be a practical success, since it allows us to directly access the resources seized from the Mafia, thereby strengthening our efforts against organized crime. Figures explain the effectiveness of this strategy better than words, so let me give the Assembly some examples.

From June 2008 to March 2010, we seized cash and movable and immovable property valued at about €9 billion. Of that total, over €1.6 billion was immediately available to support the action of law enforcement authorities; another substantial amount will go to non-governmental organizations active in the fight against crime.

On the tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Palermo Convention, Italy is playing a leading role in giving new momentum to the Convention, in close cooperation with many like-minded partners. Our main aim today is to expand the list of States parties to the Convention, as called for in resolution 64/179, which Italy proposed and which was supported by a remarkable 120 sponsors.

In the short term, our efforts should be focused on increasing the number of States participating in the fifth Conference of States Parties, which will take place in Vienna next October. Of course, we have an even more important long-term goal, namely, universal accession to the Palermo Convention. In order to achieve that goal, States that have not yet done so must

take appropriate steps to ratify the Convention and its three Protocols. For those States that wish to ratify, we have proposed a two-step process. The first step is today's special meeting of the General Assembly, which aims to build up the efforts of the international community to fight transnational organized crime. The second step is the Vienna Conference, which will offer a unique window of opportunity to end the current year with a wave of new ratifications of the Palermo Convention.

We also consider it essential to promote more effective implementation of the Convention and to fully develop the opportunities it offers in relation to new and emerging crimes. In our vision, the promotion of the universality of the Convention must go hand in hand with our commitment to ensure fully effective and up-to-date implementation of the Convention's rules. We strongly favour the establishment of a special review mechanism that will confirm the Palermo Convention as the paramount legal instrument in the fight against transnational crime in the twenty-first century.

Our society's inner strength lies in its openness and in its genuine respect for freedom, which we intend always to defend. As we fight crime and other global threats, we should be comforted by one inner certainty: that the principles and values upon which our democratic societies are built represent an essential moral compass, as well as clear signposts on our road map to the future. Rather than limiting our action, they greatly enhance the effectiveness and long-term credibility of our fight against today's most pressing challenges, above all transnational organized crime.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. I take this opportunity to renew a warm appeal to all States not yet parties to the Convention to sign and ratify it and its Protocols as a concrete way of making our comprehensive strategies against global threats more effective. We have a valuable and effective legal tool. We have a moral obligation to make the best use of it so that justice may prevail over crime in a freer, safer and more equitable world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Ms. Espinosa Cantellano (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ten years ago, the community of nations demonstrated its determination to confront transnational organized crime by arming itself with a more effective legal framework to combat it. The Palermo Convention and its three complementary Protocols form the broadest and most concrete international instrument yet created to combat organized crime.

At the time of its inception, many of us thought that this valuable tool would contribute to consolidating the rule of law in our countries and place us on the path towards development free of the threat posed by organized crime to the rule of law and the safety of our citizens. While it was an important step, it was not enough. In spite of the efforts made, criminal organizations have succeeded in diversifying their activities, expanding their areas of operations and exploiting globalization to strengthen their criminal networks. Organized crime today transcends borders and, to a greater or lesser degree, exists within the economies of all of our countries. Its activities threaten our peace, our prospects for prosperity and the strength of our institutions. This is not about a problem that affects just a few countries but, rather, given the nature and impact of the criminal activities involved, a threat that permeates each and every one of our societies.

Global illicit trafficking in firearms continues to feed conflicts and to generate violence by criminal organizations, as we in Latin America know too well.

The trade in counterfeit products is a highly lucrative activity that is all the more worrying and onerous when it involves medications. The World Economic Forum estimates that the trade in adulterated medications constitutes nearly 10 per cent of the world pharmaceutical market and generates revenues of $35 billion per year, in addition to the grave damage these products do to health.

Trafficking in human beings has become a global crime that produces annual proceeds of about $32 billion. Victims representing more than 95 nationalities and vulnerable above all to sexual exploitation have been identified in Europe. Another part of this painful phenomenon is trafficking in migrants, in particular from Latin America to North America and from Africa to Europe, as well as in children from developing to developed countries.

Drug trafficking is perhaps the most visible transnational crime, as it affects not only the domestic health, well-being and tranquillity of many countries,

but also relations between them. It is a fact that decisive action by authorities against drug trafficking in many Latin American and Caribbean countries — Mexico being a good example — has had the serious follow-on effect of intensifying competition over control of routes, thereby producing violence among cartels.

That should come as no surprise given the volume of resources circulated by organized crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that the amount of money originating in illegal activities that is laundered annually amounts to between 2 to 5 per cent of global gross domestic product, or between $800 billion and $2 trillion.

Like other countries of the world, Mexico faces the serious threat of organized crime. As a neighbour to the country with the world's highest drug consumption, Mexico has to confront transnational criminal organizations that conspire to bring into the United States substances that its laws prohibit but which its society demands, acquires and consumes on a massive scale. The earnings generated from drug trafficking to the United States have made possible the formation of powerful gangs that operate in Mexico under a complex structure and with great economic resources and exceedingly powerful arsenals. The latter is especially serious.

Criminal gangs have grown in strength thanks to the extreme ease with which weapons are acquired abroad, especially assault weapons in the United States. In the past three and a half years, the Mexican Government has seized more than 76,000 firearms from these groups — half of which were high-power weapons — as well as 5,400 grenades and 8 million rounds of ammunition.

Criminal groups have also sought to increase their revenues by selling drugs in Mexico and expanding their activities to other crimes, such as smuggling weapons and persons, extortion and kidnapping. All of that is supported by the extreme violence that such groups undertake to achieve their goals. Although the murder rate in Mexico continues to be at the lower end of the range as compared with most Latin American countries, between 2006 and 2008 the violence unleashed by organized crime unfortunately raised that level from 8 to just over 11 murders per 100,000 persons.

The Government of Mexico is facing these challenges with absolute determination. The main goals have been to regain security for Mexican families, affirm Mexico's status as a country of laws and institutions and ensure orderly and peaceful coexistence throughout the country. It is not just about combating drug trafficking, but about fully restoring public safety and the rule of law.

That fight entails a significant investment in resources and time. Regrettably, it has also meant the loss of life. The results of this effort will be clearly visible in the medium and long terms, but we have already made progress and secured significant achievements, especially in weakening both the economic structures and the capacity to operate of criminal gangs.

The largest seizures of drugs, weapons and cash from organized crime — not just in Mexican history but in the history of the world — have taken place in the course of President Calderón's term of office. It has been estimated that this effort has prevented the circulation in Mexico's streets of 80 doses of drugs for every young person between the ages of 15 and 30 years of age. In the same period, we have carried out the highest number of arrests and extraditions of organized crime leaders and members in Mexico's history.

Organized crime is not a new phenomenon. Throughout modern history, similar phenomena have been observed in quite different countries: the Cosa Nostra in Italy, gangsters in the United States, the yakuza in Japan and the drug trafficking capos in Colombia are all part of the same phenomenon. The difference is in the international reach of today's criminal organizations. Thus, it is imperative to fight them in a coordinated way through the strength of individual States together with that of the international community as a whole.

The profits flowing from organized crime exceed the gross domestic product of many countries, which gives an idea of the size and complexity of the threat. The problem of organized transnational crime is not limited to a given country or region; it is a global phenomenon that must be addressed and resolved by the international community. Organized crime takes advantage of a lack of coordination at the national level. The commitment of our countries is thus indispensable to strengthen the strategies to fight

organized international crime, beginning with full and effective implementation of the Palermo Convention and its Protocols.

No country is immune to the consequences of organized crime or can remain beyond its reach. We must understand the need to join efforts in the international arena to support the crime-reduction strategies that each country implements in its own territory. That is why today Mexico appeals firmly for universal accession to and full implementation of existing international legal instruments and the resulting mechanisms to fight transnational organized crime.

International cooperation is a key element of this struggle. International security is one and the same for all and we all share the responsibility to achieve it. It is imperative that we continue to promote universal accession to and genuine implementation of the relevant instruments. That is why the Mexican Government welcomes the decision of the Chilean Government to ratify the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

International peace, development and security require putting an end to criminality and its resulting violence. Fighting organized crime is an economic imperative for our societies as it would spur production and growth in conditions of stability and certainty. Fighting organized crime is an ethical imperative for our countries, because it means fighting for individual dignity. Fighting organized crime is a political imperative for our Governments because it means fighting in favour of justice, the rule of law and security, within and beyond our borders. Ultimately it is a fight for our freedom to develop without any threats, thereby achieving our full potential.

Let us form a united front against crime and in favour of peace, security and international development.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie Bockel, State Secretary of Justice.

Mr. Bockel (France) (*spoke in French*): I will not repeat the description of the international situation we are currently facing which has already been so well provided by my colleagues from Italy and Mexico. It is true that because of increased globalization the power of organized crime has been transformed. It has become a threat to our democracies, in particular by merging with lawful society.

But now that we have together made a clear assessment of the situation, it is our responsibility to establish, without fatalism but rather proactively, a coherent and effective international strategy to fight transnational crime. As the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico just said, that is the only way to fight this criminal phenomenon.

We are convinced that by setting rules we will be able to push back the crime that has brought forth the chaotic global procession of human trafficking, including trafficking in children, drug trafficking, arms trafficking and counterfeiting and forgery, whether of consumer goods or medical goods. The fight against these activities, which generate large profits, is part of the framework of common and shared political responsibility that requires an integrated approach in order to respond to these threats in all their aspects.

Today's meeting, in the context of the General Assembly, reflects our commitment to addressing this issue effectively at the political level. In our view, the road map we established at the twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in April, seems to be encouraging.

Since that is a priority goal, France would like this theme to be debated in all United Nations forums and at all levels. It was to that end that my delegation organized a thematic Security Council debate on 24 February on drug trafficking and cross-cutting threats (see S/PV.6277).

France is convinced of the urgent need to highlight the security dimension in addition to the necessary economic, social and health measures to promote such a global approach. We welcome the fact that some of the countries most severely affected by transnational crime — which increasingly affects all of us — are resolutely committed to using this approach to tackle these cross-cutting threats.

On that issue, we welcome in particular the initiative of Italy and Mexico, and I also associate myself with the position of the Spanish presidency of the European Union. Equally I welcome the initiative of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria to submit a draft resolution aimed at strengthening international

cooperation in this area, at the nineteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, in May.

This high-level General Assembly meeting enables us to reaffirm the great importance we attach to the universalization and effective implementation of the existing framework formed by United Nations conventions, in particular by the Palermo Convention, whose tenth anniversary we are marking this year. The Palermo Convention remains the benchmark instrument for effectively combating transnational crime. It is true, as my colleagues have noted, that its implementation is still incomplete. We need to jointly reflect on the best way to use this remarkable instrument as we look ahead to the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

In that respect and in anticipation of the October Conference in Vienna, we would like today's debate to be a chance to signal our determination to make full use of the opportunities and potential of the Palermo Convention, including with respect to cooperation, mutual legal assistance and joint inquiries, in the fight against transnational organized crime.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime — whose Director General, Mr. Costa, chaired an interesting panel discussion this morning — must therefore focus on effectively implementing the potential of this text through considering the establishment of a mechanism to evaluate the Palermo Convention and monitor its implementation.

Lastly, I reaffirm the importance of the technical assistance that we must provide to the most vulnerable States, including through strengthening the rule of law, in particular for certain fragile States. On 14 June, I attended a meeting that took place at the initiative of the European Union in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on this important issue. I am also thinking of regional cooperation in West Africa, the Caribbean and along all drug trafficking routes, which have also now become routes for terrorism.

As members will have understood, France is convinced that only a global and political response can effectively combat these global criminal scourges which, by definition, recognize no borders. We believe that the Palermo Convention is an essential instrument that we must develop while continuing to urge those that have yet to accede to it to do so. What is at stake is the democratic future of our States and our fundamental liberties.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rodrigo Hinzpeter, Minister of the Interior of Chile.

Mr. Hinzpeter (Chile): It is a great honour for me, as the Minister in charge of home affairs, to represent the Republic of Chile in addressing this very important gathering at United Nations Headquarters in New York. On behalf of our president, His Excellency Mr. Sebastián Piñera, I would like to congratulate the General Assembly on the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Palermo Convention.

Let me take this opportunity to announce that on 8 June, our country ratified the third Protocol of the Palermo Convention: the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. We can therefore say that, as of today, we have fully endorsed all the instruments of the Palermo Convention. We want to encourage all countries that have not yet done so to follow the same path as Chile.

This was an important step for us. For the past seven years, crime has unfortunately become Chilean citizens' primary cause for concern. Even though our country does not have high rates of violent crime, we are still suffering high rates of crime against property, and firearms, especially smaller guns, are too often used by criminals to hurt our people and to disrupt our way of life.

That is why the endorsement of the third Protocol is so relevant for us: when they are illicitly manufactured and trafficked, firearms, which should be an instrument for bringing order, security and peace, become tools that foment fear and violence.

But the relevance of the Convention for our country obviously goes beyond the scope of that Protocol. We understand well that transnational crime, because of its devastating impacts, is a threat that we need to address with strength and conviction. It is an enemy that has no regret when it poisons our kids with drugs, tries sometimes successfully to corrupt our police and judges with illegal money and brutal extortion, and kidnaps or kills innocent people. Transnational crime respects no limits in the pursuit of its purposes.

But strength and conviction are not enough. We need international cooperation. And that is why this Convention is so important. Transnational crime is an enemy that makes no distinctions. It hits poor countries and rich countries, nations from the North, South, East and West, communities with differing religious beliefs and ethnic origins. Transnational crime is an enemy to liberal and conservative Governments alike. Transnational crime is an enemy that hurts every country on the planet. But no country can defeat it by itself.

That is why we need to continue our work together, cooperating against crime, setting our differences aside when we have them. That is why we must continue our common effort to bring peace and security to our families, our neighbourhoods, our countries. For, peace and security are the two fundamental pillars on which we can build our shared dream of spreading liberty, democracy and prosperity to people in every corner of our beloved planet.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-François Ndongou, Minister of the Interior, Public Security, Immigration and Decentralization of Gabon.

Mrs. Atayeva (Turkmenistan), Vice President, took the Chair.

Mr. Ndongou (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My country duly values the present General Assembly initiative to convene a special high-level meeting on transnational organized crime. This meeting is taking place in the context of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Assembly's adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Palermo Convention. We take this opportunity to renew our support for the role played by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the fight against organized transnational crime, through its excellent assistance to States and its many activities at the national, regional and global levels.

We are delighted to contribute to this high-level meeting focused on two principal concerns: promoting the universalization of the Palermo Convention and its Protocols; and international cooperation.

Regarding the first issue, Gabon fully supports the campaign to promote the universalization of the Palermo Convention and its Protocols. We welcome the fact that in the 10 years since the Assembly's adoption of the Convention, many States have become parties, including my country, Gabon. In fact, with 154 States having ratified the Convention, it is evident that the trend is towards its universalization. Significant efforts need to be made to encourage States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify or accede to the optional Protocols of the Convention.

This is crucial given the cross-cutting nature of organized transnational crime. This was reiterated during the Security Council debate held on 24 February 2010 under the French presidency (see S/PV.6277), which was dedicated to cross-cutting threats to international peace and security. Indeed, the proliferation of criminal networks throughout the world, including cybercrime, and the cross-cutting threats posed by such networks have immeasurable consequences on the stability of countries and regions. These increasingly complex and far-reaching networks at once promote corruption and slow the economic and social development of our countries. Attaining the goal of the universalization of these important legal instruments against transnational organized crime would deliver a holistic response to this major threat to international peace and security.

The transnational nature of drug trafficking and organized crime and its impact on the security and stability of States mean that we need to consolidate regional and international cooperation. Such cooperation might focus more on strengthening the capacities of the States most vulnerable to these criminal networks. We must also support regional initiatives aimed at promoting cooperative operations that take into account the specific realities of each region.

The Gabonese Government has been engaged for many years in the fight against drugs and human trafficking, particularly trafficking in children, as covered by the Palermo Convention. In regard to the first point, our Government is party to a number of United Nations conventions on this issue, including the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. With a view to coordinating its efforts against such trafficking, Gabon instituted in 1991 a central anti-drug office, which is a prevention and enforcement agency. Its prevention work is focused on raising awareness in target areas, notably schools. Operationally, the activities of the anti-drug office extend throughout the country through provincial satellite offices. On the

enforcement side, our Government has strengthened a number of provisions of the penal code on penalties for narcotics-related crimes, including growing, processing, importing, exporting, sale, use and possession of narcotics.

In the matter of trafficking in children, my Government would like to reaffirm its support for the negotiations under way to develop a comprehensive United Nations action plan on human trafficking. We believe that such a political instrument would strengthen the legal measures now in force on this subject by taking trafficking in children into account. For a number of years we have been a destination country and a transit country for the child victims of that traffic. We have taken significant steps to fight that phenomenon. The Government has realized its commitment by enacting a law against the trafficking in and exploitation of minors and by arresting persons suspected of engaging in such trafficking. Specialized judicial police units within our national police force are charged with strict enforcement of this law. Our challenge is to unmask the perpetrators of these disgraceful deeds and deliver them to justice.

To prevent child trafficking we also work in close collaboration with UNICEF, the media and national and international non-governmental organizations. This cooperative effort has allowed us to recently board and inspect a boat in our territorial waters that carried dozens of children who, after being given appropriate care, were returned by Gabon to their countries of origin.

Our efforts against international organized crime must be intensified. My country supports the political declaration to be adopted at the end of this high-level meeting and hopes that it will reaffirm our commitment to continue the fight against this threat to international peace and security. We are convinced that the next Conference of the Parties to the Palermo Convention, to be held in Vienna in October, will give us a new opportunity to reaffirm the need for a more effective and coordinated implementation of that international legal instrument which is so important to our fight against drugs and transboundary crime.

The Acting President *(spoke in Russian)*: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José María Tijerino, Minister of the Interior, Police and Public Security of Costa Rica.

Mr. Tijerino (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by thanking the President of the Assembly for convening this commemorative meeting to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime and the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention. Likewise, we want to thank the Governments of Mexico and Italy for their valuable contributions to this important meeting.

The Government of Costa Rica is aware of the ominous power of organized crime. Our peace, our institutions, our freedom in all its many expressions and our moderate habits are severely threatened by the Colombian and Mexican drug cartels that, having been brought into check by the determined actions of their own Governments, have found in our small and defenceless country an alternative locale for their vile criminal activities. From a country where marijuana was secretly cultivated in a few remote areas for local consumption, we have become a point of transit for cocaine to the United States and Europe and a stockpiling centre for international distribution — with the resulting presence in our territory of members of all the cartels, who make of our country the theatre of their wars for control of traffic routes. The hit-men and their bloody settling of accounts are horrifying to the citizens of a country that only yesterday enjoyed one of the lowest murder rates in the world.

It is with growing concern that we see with each day more of our citizens getting involved in this vile traffic, how our fishers exchange their honourable trade to put themselves in the service of organized crime transporting and harbouring on our shores shipments of cocaine or refuelling foreign vessels that are on the way north with their illegal cargoes. Small fortunes of unknown origin are cropping up throughout our country. Shameful prosperity with its roots in moral and economic poverty is swallowing an increasing number of unfortunate compatriots that are addicted to crack. These victims in turn become distributors in exchange for a few daily rocks that will allow them to support their addiction, or they rob or even murder to get the wherewithal to maintain their habits. Crime is spiralling, insecurity is increasing at a tremendous pace and the cry of citizens for the peace and calm that they recently lost has meant that security became the main issue of debate in the most recent election campaign,

which ended in the election of Laura Chinchilla Miranda as President of the Republic in February.

The primary objective of the Government of Costa Rica, which took office on 8 May, is the security of citizens. The challenge that we face is huge owing not only to the immeasurable power of organized crime but also to the weakness of our police forces, which in that struggle do not receive the cooperation of the international community that is often granted to the armed forces of other countries.

Thus, we are being punished for having declared peace to the world: for not having an army. With weak resources, our sparse police forces daily wage an unequal fight against the international drug cartels, which are also arms traffickers. With a spiritual calling to serve and strive to meet international commitments, we compensate for our shortcomings in numbers, equipment, weapons and infrastructure. In fact, our newspapers today are reporting the break-up in Costa Rica of a branch of the ruthless Mexican Michoacán cartel, with the arrest of seven Mexican citizens and 11 Costa Rican nationals and the seizure of 250 kilograms of cocaine, 476 of compressed marijuana and a kilogram of heroin.

We have readily acceded to international cooperation agreements on the joint patrol of our exclusive maritime zone, which has proved to be extremely productive. However, paradoxically, it has also meant that this has become the entry point for the trafficking by sea of drugs coming from South America that now pe[illegible] in through coastal shipping that seeks shelter in the numerous coves along our Pacific and Caribbean coasts. This has led to the unloading and storing of drugs on Costa Rican beaches in order to then transport them by land or air to the North, and, even worse for Costa Ricans, to supply an unfortunately increasingly flourishing local market.

In view of such a tragic outlook, it is natural that we highly value international cooperation. For that reason, we engage in a ceaseless search for technical assistance in order to establish a true police academy and to train our future Coast Guard officers abroad. We are also seeking the equipment and training to set up a radar network to make it possible to accurately locate the overflight of suspicious aircraft early enough before they land so as to be able to send police forces to the site.

I conclude by declaring that Costa Rica reiterates its determined resolve to honour all its international commitments in the fight against organized crime, with particular emphasis on the effective implementation of the Palermo Convention and its Protocols.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to The Honourable Erik Lahnstein, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Mr. Lahnstein (Norway): Norway is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important high-level meeting on transnational organized crime. The human suffering and costs due to organized crime are enormous. We have made significant progress in countering criminal networks, but we need to do more. We need to be smarter and cooperate more efficiently to be even more effective in the future.

The report presented by Executive Director Costa this morning gives important new insights on the amount of the proceeds of transnational organized crimes. Earlier, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated the annual market value of cocaine and heroin in Europe alone to be $54 billion. That is approximately one third to one quarter of the annual budget of my country, Norway. And that is only one sort of crime in one part of the world.

The Global Financial Integrity Institute estimates illicit capital flows out of all developing countries to be as large as $1 trillion per year. That is 10 times the aid entering those same countries. Proceeds of organized crime have been estimated to account for perhaps as much as 35 per cent of that amount.

Lessons learned from countries such as Norway show that measures to increase transparency and to identify illicit financial flows have contributed substantially to our fight against organized crime. At this morning's panel discussion and in his statement this afternoon, it was very inspiring to hear the Justice Minister of Italy, Mr. Alfano, and learn more about the good work and rewarding results of the Italian Government in going after assets stemming from organized crime. But it is important that such efforts to go after the money be conducted with a global approach as well.

Increased transparency is probably the most powerful tool to reduce the hiding and laundering of the proceeds of crime. Part of the effort to increase transparency should be to require all financial service

providers to know whose money they are handling. That means the true owner, not the first or second layer of a disguised entity controlling an account. That is reflected in the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but much needs to be done in the implementation of those recommendations — and most States are not members of the OECD.

White-collar criminals are profiting from crime, but those few who are arrested face mild sentences. To counter such criminals, we need more knowledge about the criminal groups, from the opium producers in Afghanistan to the heroin markets in Russia, Norway and other markets. But we also need to know much more about how these criminal groups transfer and launder their proceeds in the international financial system. They should not be allowed to take advantage of weaknesses in global financial structures.

We therefore welcome UNODC's increased focus on the proceeds of crime.

The report presented this morning gives important and valuable estimates of the enormous cash flows related to these crimes. Norway is eager to build further on this good work and undertake a more in-depth analysis. Where does the money originate, how is it transferred and how are its ownership and origin hidden? What are the instruments used to hide the money? More specifically, which features of the international financial institutional set-up represent the most significant weaknesses with regard to the crackdown on international organized crime?

Norway has decided to fund and cooperate with UNODC on a study which covers those aspects, and we are eager to cooperate with other countries on it. The work will draw upon the Office's unique expertise in the area of drugs, crime and money laundering. The study should include the experience of all interested Member States. It should also include lessons learned within the financial sector and the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering of the OECD, where many of us are represented. The study should address the crimes under UNODC's mandate, meaning proceeds from drugs, transnational organized crime and corruption.

A discussion within the United Nations and the Financial Action Task Force will be mutually reinforcing, but the United Nations will not replace the expertise of Task Force. Their differing scopes, purposes and memberships are the most obvious differences. UNODC has a unique role to play in providing technical assistance to its many member States in implementing the Conventions.

The adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was a breakthrough in our joint efforts, but we need to move forward. Identifying how the proceeds of crime are integrated into the financial system and ensuring increasing transparency will be an important step in taking this work further forward. We count on members' cooperation in this regard.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to The Honourable Vilayat Eyvazov, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Eyvazov (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to thank the organizers of this high-level meeting for having selected such a relevant theme and for the format of our activities, which truly facilitates fruitful discussion.

The importance of this topic cannot be overstated. Transnational organized crime is among the most dangerous threats to humankind and democratic values, and it is constantly making new inroads. The clear challenges and threats we face from organized crime are the reason why the international community is seeking effective and realistic approaches to the prevention of organized crime on the basis of agreed international and regional efforts.

In our view, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of the system of collective security and all of its components. By that I mean strategy, format, functions, obligations and so forth. The strategy needs to be effective, flexible, economically rational and fair. Today's interlinked, multifaceted and complex threats need to be opposed with an integrated and adequately resourced system of security.

We fully share the common concerns and we agree with previous speakers that transnational organized crime undermines development, lowers standards of living and threatens human rights and freedoms. At the same time, we welcome the work that continues to be carried out by the United Nations to consolidate efforts to build collective security, develop standards and norms, create an effective international

framework and build State capacity to enforce the rule of law.

A global plan of action against transnational organized crime is an important step in that direction. The signing of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention — illustrated the political will and the determination of our States to protect and strengthen law and order and to implement realistic and concrete organizational and practical measures. The Convention reflects the multidisciplinary, comprehensive and universal approach, and it is has a clear preventive slant.

In our view, the Convention is an effective, balanced and universal document. Among other things, it contains realistic provisions, defines organized crime and includes provisions on legal assistance. It defines corruption and sets out unified criteria for corruption, money laundering and membership of criminal groups.

Over the past few years, thanks to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, we have made sufficient progress to let us look to the future with optimism. I would like to point out that in the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is an active participant in the fight against organized crime, we are stepping up our efforts to protect public security and build closer links with our overseas law enforcement partners. We have carried out many activities to enhance our national legislation. We have implemented the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. We have adopted a range of laws on the fight against the most dangerous crimes. In their routine activities, our normal and special law enforcement authorities make real and positive use of the instruments and tools provided by that international document.

Unfortunately, however, we are lagging behind in terms of adopting measures to fight against these threats, which are growing at a faster pace than the measures that we are adopting. We are seeing the emergence of corporate organized crime: transnational criminal groups are seeking to use their presence in various sectors of the economy — such as construction, lending and finance and banking — and they are using advanced technologies and looking for new ways to implement their plans. To understand this, one has only to look at how fast they have penetrated the Internet, for example. We see theft of services, the criminal use of communications, forgery, information piracy, money laundering, e-terrorism, fraud, the sale and production of pornography and so forth.

As part of our national plans, the Republic of Azerbaijan is cooperating with a number of international and regional organizations. We are coordinating our activities with overseas partners and are seeking to fight organized crime using organized measures, with a view to protecting our domestic and external security.

Transnational criminal enterprises are seeking to use the Republic of Azerbaijan as a springboard for their activities. They are using our country as a transit point for drugs, human trafficking, et cetera. Evidence shows that these trends truly exist. We are closely following these phenomena and seeking to pre-empt them to the greatest possible extent.

Law enforcement authorities are making full use of the array of tools provided by the international community. They are exchanging information with their counterparts and seeking to use forms of cooperation such as extradition.

Our effective collective security and the key role of the Palermo Convention and its Protocols and other similar international instruments are hallmarks of the times. We believe that we must continue to strengthen cooperation and that this meeting will help us to achieve that aim if the views, ideas and proposals heard here today are considered and subsequently implemented in the fight against transnational organized crime.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to The Honourable Carlos Alfredo Castaneda Magana, Vice Minister of Foreign Relations, Integration and Economic Affairs of El Salvador.

Mr. Castaneda Magaña (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of El Salvador would like to express its appreciation for the convening of this high-level meeting on transnational organized crime, pursuant to resolution 64/179, in the context of the fifteenth anniversary of the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime and the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention.

It is a fact that the worldwide problem of transnational organized crime is a serious threat to

national and international security inasmuch as it violates the rule of law, fosters corruption, exacerbates armed violence and promotes every kind of related crime, while seriously hampering the social and economic development of our peoples. In that regard, El Salvador reiterates its commitment to contributing to the joint fight against the problem, in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility, on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced approach, and in conformity with international law, in particular full respect of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

We agree that a decisive element in the fight against transnational organized crime is creating effective justice systems and strengthening cooperation among States in the area of mutual judicial assistance in criminal matters so as to generate more effective and efficient legal frameworks, taking into account the transnational nature of organized crime. We also note how important it is for States to share lessons learned and best practices in the struggle against this global problem, and for the relevant United Nations bodies to assist in building the capacities of national institutions charged with combating drug trafficking, not only through prevention and fighting it, but also primarily through punishment and rehabilitation.

We welcome the impact of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the Central America region in providing assistance and advice to the various national and regional security initiatives, such as the ministerial conference held in Managua, Nicaragua, in June 2009.

Like other countries in the Central American region, El Salvador is affected by transnational organized crime as it is a victim of the close link between such crime and the armed violence, kidnapping and extortion that are part of the activities of criminal gangs, which have become a manifestation of the transnational organized crime that has spread throughout the Central American region. El Salvador has focused its efforts on addressing the problem through a comprehensive approach, including preventive actions such as educating communities, broadening civil society participation in this task and generating trust in law enforcement bodies, thereby helping to build capacities holistically, on the basis of citizen cooperation.

We are convinced that national strategies against transnational organized crime must be part of a broad regional and international conceptual framework that promotes actions and programmes that take into account the diverse security needs of countries and the different aspects of that issue. For that reason, we welcome the Naples Political Declaration and the ongoing implementation of the legal instruments of the Palermo Convention and its Protocols.

In El Salvador, one underlying issue at this time is the fight against drug trafficking and related crimes, the consequences of the use, abuse and illegal use of psychotropic substances, and the harm caused by that phenomenon both to health and to the overall development of people, and hence of nations. Drug trafficking has become one of the main illegal activities of transnational organized crime in our region. Therefore, it should be recalled in this context that El Salvador has signed and ratified international instruments in various fields, seeking to reduce the demand and supply of drugs and related crimes. It has also signed 12 bilateral cooperation agreements with other Latin American countries. Furthermore, committed to fighting organized crime, El Salvador has ratified 14 of the 16 relevant international instruments, including the Palermo Convention and its Protocols, and is considering joining other instruments on this matter.

At the regional level, Central America and the Caribbean have set up mechanisms, such as the Santo Domingo Agreement and its follow-up mechanism, the Managua Plan, adopted in September 2009 to complement the 2007 Security Strategy for Central America and Mexico, whose focus included the fight against organized crime, drug trafficking, gangs, arms trafficking, terrorism and corruption, taking as a reference point the international legal instruments adopted in that area.

I should like to draw particular attention to the issue of criminal gangs, which are no longer a social problem in El Salvador but have become part of organized crime, seriously threatening the safety of citizens and public order. Owing to the extent of the problem, the President of the Republic of El Salvador, Mr. Mauricio Funes, has given the issue of public security special priority, on which he is undertaking a broad process of consultations with the various sectors of society. He has also convened the diplomatic corps accredited to our country to listen to their views and

suggestions on the proposals presented in the National Policy for Justice, Public Safety and Harmony, which includes policies on how to comprehensively address crime responsibly on the basis of social investment, such as education, health care and job creation.

In that regard, I must stress that Government's five-year plan envisages public investment of some $4 billion, 70 per cent of which will be earmarked for social plans, because we believe that crime is addressed not only through prevention, but also by investing in health care, education, vocational training and job creation.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the full readiness of the Governments of Brazil, Spain and other friendly countries to provide cooperation and technical assistance in various areas of public safety. We must also underscore the fact that, in the context of national efforts to control and fight crime, on 18 February El Salvador's Legislative Assembly, unanimously among all political factions, adopted the law on intervention and interference with telecommunications, implementation of which will fall to the Office of our Attorney General, whose activities will be audited by the Office of the National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights.

I also wish to mention that our Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently signed with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime the integrated action programme for El Salvador on strengthening the rule of law and public safety in the face of crime, which is an important tool in the fight against crime in general. That is why we urge Member States to offer us their political support and valuable financial assistance in order to help implement this innovative programme.

We Central American countries are making enormous institutional efforts to counteract and fight against transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and related crimes, trafficking in persons and money laundering, among other crimes. This is generating very high costs in terms of money that could be used to strengthen economic and social development, including making progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

No one can be unaware that transnational organized crime and terrorism and the innumerable crimes arising from them are not limited to the territory of each State. Hence, the clear need for international cooperation and shared responsibility are important factors in collectively addressing and fighting against such issues. In that regard, we call for even greater cooperation and international, regional, subregional and bilateral technical assistance as essential tools to build national and multilateral capacities in the fight against this scourge.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to The Honourable Elizabeth Verville, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States.

Ms. Verville (United States of America): Let me begin by thanking the Governments of Mexico and Italy for spearheading today's meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the milestone of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The Convention represents a watershed for the international community in its efforts to combat serious crime. In a globalized world, we increasingly face transnational organized crime, which is growing in scope, scale and harm. As underscored by President Obama, in recent years the world has seen a convergence of transnational threats and networks, which are more dangerous and destabilizing than ever. These evolving threats and networks are becoming more fluid and sophisticated, are able to cross borders and involve elements of international organized crime, illicit finance and trafficking in drugs and persons. This can undermine stability and security, fuel violence and corruption, weaken the rule of law and subvert legitimate economies.

The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is the first legally binding instrument to commit members to collective action and international cooperation against these threats. It is supplemented by three groundbreaking Protocols to combat trafficking in persons, the smuggling of migrants and illicit trafficking in firearms. Of significant note, the Protocol on trafficking in persons contains the first internationally agreed definition of trafficking in persons as a separate crime in its own right. The Protocol has successfully raised the consciousness of States, leading many for the first time to create specific criminal provisions within their domestic law in order to prosecute the perpetrators of this form of modern slavery, as well as to undertake measures that protect victims and help prevent this crime.

No State is immune from the harm caused by international crime, and no State acting alone can effectively counter criminal networks that ignore our borders with impunity. It is critical that we work collectively to translate the requirements and opportunities of the Convention into concrete action. As of June 2010 — at least, before today — 154 States had ratified the Convention, thereby committing themselves to its unique framework for cooperation, including mutual legal assistance, extradition and uniform requirements for criminalizing serious crimes committed by organized criminal groups.

Even more important, States are increasingly using the Convention for law enforcement purposes. For its part, the United States has used it and/or its Protocols on more than 25 occasions as a basis for extradition and mutual legal assistance requests, including for illegal arms trafficking, money laundering and fraud prosecutions.

The Convention lays the framework for greatly expanded cooperation among prosecutors and other law enforcement officials, and today's event reminds us that we must continue to work together even more closely towards its universal implementation. To that end, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) deserves special mention as a key provider of technical assistance to help States in the practical application of the Convention's provisions. The United States is committed to continuing its support for UNODC's capacity-building efforts.

At the same time, the United States will continue to complement that multilateral engagement with bilateral assistance to help equip States with the ability to successfully investigate and prosecute criminals, in full conformity with the rule of law and respect for human rights, while also protecting victims and witnesses. Such endeavours to strengthen criminal justice systems are a long-term process that will be facilitated by increased coordination not only among donors, but also with partner nations on the ground.

To help focus, direct and make best use of that assistance, we must also develop an effective mechanism to review implementation and promote practical application of the Convention and its Protocols. Our work in the months before the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Convention in October will help lay the foundation for progress towards an agreed review mechanism. Already, a dozen countries, including the United States, have agreed to participate in a pilot project to test methods of review. The interim results of that endeavour could help inform the fifth Conference of the Parties as it considers a review mechanism.

In addition to acting on our treaty commitments and increasing multilateral cooperation, there are other definite steps that States can take in the short term to prevent their territories from being used as safe havens for criminal organizations and their assets. In the experience of the United States, visa denial, including the revocation of already issued visas, has proven an effective tool, particularly for targeting corrupt officials, their family members, those that corrupt them, and their assets. Corruption greases the wheels for organized crime groups, and even terrorists, leading officials that our citizens depend on most to turn a blind eye or even to facilitate criminal activity. Targeting these corrupt facilitators sends a strong message that such illicit behaviour will not be tolerated, and responsible States can demonstrate that they will not be complicit with those that help victimize their own citizens.

Such action also reinforces the United Nations Convention against Corruption — a complementary Convention that entered into force in December 2005. As we prepare to launch the Corruption Convention's review mechanism in Vienna later this month, each and every participating State should reaffirm its commitment to using its individual review to the fullest extent possible, serving as a model of transparency and diligence. Participants should welcome site visits, engage in consultation with non-governmental stakeholders, and agree to publication of the full outcomes. The United States is committed to following those principles both in its own review and in the review of other participants.

In closing, as highlighted in the recently released United States National Security Strategy, combating transnational organized crime requires a multidimensional strategy that safeguards citizens, disrupts illicit trafficking networks, breaks the financial strength of criminal networks, fights Government corruption, strengthens the rule of law, bolsters judicial systems and improves transparency. Our discussions today have demonstrated that there is no silver bullet to end the scourge of transnational organized crime. Rather, each State must undertake a range of short- and long-term actions, with a view to

enhancing international cooperation and strengthening the international framework that we are commemorating here today: the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. To that end, the United States reaffirms its commitment to move forward in this common and shared responsibility.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I should like to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Governments of Italy and Mexico for having organized this high-level meeting, as well as the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for their statements.

Transnational organized crime has become a global threat that restrains the development of legitimate economic activities and in many cases undermines democracy and the full enjoyment of human rights. Moreover, in some cases, it has forged links with international terrorism. As noted in various reports by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and recently noted by the Security Council (see S/PRST/2010/4), transnational organized crime poses serious threats to international peace and security.

Transnational organized crime is a global phenomenon that takes many forms: human trafficking, drug trafficking, money laundering, piracy, hostage taking and emerging criminal practices such as cybercrime or identity theft. Furthermore, it evolves in parallel with technological developments, becoming ever more skilled at transcending borders. This is a challenge, therefore, that can be taken on only through an appropriate joint response at the global, regional and national levels. Effectively tackling this challenge will call for concerted action and effective judicial and law enforcement cooperation, along with ensuring respect for the fundamental freedoms and security of all people.

The European Union supports the development of multilateral approaches to fighting this type of crime and stresses the important role to be played by the United Nations in this respect. Ten years ago, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention — and the Protocols thereto, were opened for signature, providing us with the basic legal instruments and the necessary foundations for effective cooperation to tackle organized crime at the international level. One hundred and fifty-four States have become party to the Convention. The European Union is also party to the Convention and two of its Protocols and has signed the third. The majority of the countries of the European Union, as well as a number of candidate countries and countries of the Stabilization and Association Process, have ratified these instruments. However, we still have a long way to go to achieve universal ratification. We take this opportunity to reiterate our call for universal adherence to the Convention and its Protocols, and we support the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to that end.

Universal adherence to the Palermo system must go hand in hand with its effective implementation. We invite all States to continue their efforts in this regard and to take advantage of the assistance offered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in this area.

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention will hold its fifth session in October, when it should take decisions concerning, among other issues, the establishment of an implementation review mechanism. The European Union advocates a single review mechanism that is effective and able to provide reliable information on the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, in order to identify gaps, technical assistance needs, positive experiences and good practices. To that end, the European Union welcomes the launching of a voluntary pilot project which will allow the next Conference of the Parties to take an informed decision on this matter.

One of the priority objectives of the European Union, reaffirmed by the Treaty of Lisbon, is to create an area of freedom, security and justice, where the fundamental rights of every individual are respected. The European Union is improving its legislative framework and intensifying cooperation on police,

customs and judicial matters, with a view to combating the most serious forms of transnational crime. The European arrest warrant is one of the most useful tools for cooperation within the Union. Examples of progress attained over recent years include the establishment of joint investigation teams, the extension of the principle of mutual recognition to include orders calling for the freezing of property and seizure of evidence or the confiscation of crime-related proceeds, instrumentalities and property.

Among the various forms of transnational organized crime, human trafficking is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Poverty, economic and social marginalization, gender inequalities and lack of respect for human rights are the underlying causes of this phenomenon, the majority of whose victims are women, children and young people.

We are pleased that the number of States parties to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons has risen to 132 this year. The European Union urges the parties to the Protocol to step up their efforts towards its effective implementation. For its part, the European Union is fully committed to fighting this modern form of slavery. We are working on a directive aimed at further harmonizing national legislation and improving cooperation on legal and police arenas in this area. It is hoped that such a directive will include, among other things, provisions for better protecting victims as well as preventative measures aimed at reducing demand.

At the same time, we are aware that transnational organized crime thrives on the corrupt practices and networks that result from poor governance. The European Union attaches particular importance to preventing and combating corruption at all levels and is firmly committed to strengthening international cooperation in this area. The United Nations Convention against Corruption is an essential tool to that end, and 144 States have ratified it. We encourage States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify this instrument as soon as possible.

Last November, the third Conference of the States parties to the Convention adopted an implementation review mechanism. We are confident that this mechanism will help to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention and will strengthen international cooperation, while better identifying the technical assistance needs of States.

To conclude, strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice capacities is essential to combat transnational organized crime. In this context, the European Union welcomes the outcome of the twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, recently held in Brazil, as well as that of the recent Vienna session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The provision of technical assistance plays a key role in achieving sustainable and long-lasting results, in particular through building, modernizing and strengthening criminal justice systems. The European Union appreciates the high quality of the work carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in this area. We are committed to continue to support the Office in the fulfilment of its mandate.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Suriname.

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to speak on the issue of transnational organized crime.

In the Caribbean, transnational organized crime and its attendant cross-border activities have evolved into a major threat to regional security as the countries within the region grapple with increased criminal activity, which has moved from random acts of criminality to criminal activities that are being carried out in an increasingly organized and highly professional manner. These indicators undeniably point to a changing dynamic of illicit cross-border activity in a progressively more sophisticated and technological global environment.

Transnational organized crime is a major destabilizing factor that affects the security and stability of countries of the Western Hemisphere and, indeed, the rest of the world. The increasing availability of illicit small arms and light weapons within the region and their close links to global trafficking in illegal drugs, the effect of money laundering, terrorist activities, cybercrime and trafficking in persons, among other factors, have all evolved into a multidimensional threat that has had a negative impact on public security and safety. The Caribbean region, needless to say, is especially affected by this threat.

As a result, various Governments within the region are already aggressively pursuing a number of

measures aimed at addressing the issue of transnational organized crime, including the adoption of bilateral, regional and global arrangements. These measures have mostly resulted in identifying new approaches and ideas, as well as in the exchange of information and experiences. Moreover, CARICOM States are undertaking legislative review and amendments, institutional reform and capacity-building, through their respective national security and criminal justice frameworks.

A number of States within the region have ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime along with its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Many Governments have also demonstrated their commitment to confronting this threat by acceding to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

The region has shown its commitment in the fight against transnational organized crime through the establishment, by CARICOM heads of Government, of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, as well as through the use of newly emergent technologies and training and skills enhancement programmes, all aimed at enhancing capacity and competencies among regional law enforcement agencies. Additionally, CARICOM States have embarked on fostering judicial cooperation and legislative reform and on the introduction of critical e-tracing technology in the fight against transnational organized crime.

The adoption in 2009 of the Political Declaration on Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime, Terrorism and other Serious Crime in the Caribbean further affirms the region's ongoing commitment to the issue.

The region, however, maintains its strong position on the need to strengthen collaboration and cooperation among States and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in an effort to address the challenge. Due to the limited resources and the vulnerabilities of our economies, we are of the firm view that it is only through a coordinated and multilateral approach that we can effectively counter these threats.

It is therefore with great anticipation that we look forward to a revitalization of the relationship between CARICOM and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime by the proposed reestablishment of a country office in the Caribbean. This presence will indeed enhance the region's approach to tackling the many challenges faced as a result of transnational organized crime.

On this occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, CARICOM has expressed its support for the adoption of a political declaration as an important expression of political will on the part of Member States to eradicate this global phenomenon, which requires concerted action by the international community. In that regard, we regret that an agreement could not be reached on the text for such a declaration.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Valero Briceño, Deputy Foreign Minister and Permanent Representative to the United Nations of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to express its appreciation to the delegations of the United Mexican States and the Republic of Italy for their commendable advocacy of this important meeting. We would also like to extend our words of appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for having gathered us here this afternoon to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention.

Ten years after the adoption of the Palermo Convention, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela underscores its importance and full relevance as the only multilateral international instrument that promotes cooperation among States to prevent, investigate and try crimes linked to transnational organized crime. For the first time, this instrument was able to establish a definition of organized crime and create criminal-justice criteria for the consideration of States parties.

In recent decades, there has been an alarming process of transnationalization of criminal activities. Organized crime has consolidated and has spread

throughout the world and is now a significant concern of the international community. Venezuela recognizes the dimensions and new trends of transnational organized crime, and we believe that these crimes are serious violations of societal harmony and therefore must be combated with determination in line with relevant national regulations and making use of the necessary international cooperation.

Thus, the spirit of the Convention must be strictly protected, given the fact that sovereign States must lead the battle against this appalling scourge. The diverse and advanced economic, technological and operational capabilities of these criminal organizations makes them a sufficiently powerful enterprise able to surpass, in some instances, the power of States and the ability of their institutions to respond to it. The increase in the activities of transnational criminal organizations has even come to affect, in some cases, the legal stability of some States and the well-being of its populations. Given the new and challenging threats posed by this scourge and in order to ensure the public security of sovereign States, the international community should increase cooperation through the implementation of effective and efficient measures to promote the fight against organized crime at all levels, as provided for in the Palermo Convention. Universal adherence to the Convention, as the international legal framework that helps in addressing crime with a truly multilateral approach, is now more urgent than ever.

Transnational organized crime must be addressed in a holistic manner. Determined efforts must be made in the area of prevention and, in particular, in targeting the root causes of this phenomenon to find structural solutions. Poverty, hunger, marginalization and social injustice are the hotbeds of transnational organized crime as a result of a capitalist economic and social model that causes and reproduces these phenomena ad infinitum. It is imperative that we eradicate these scourges and create societies based on the rule of law and justice with the full application of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We highlight the inappropriateness of treating issues related to transnational organized crime as security issues. The challenges posed by these transnational crimes should not be an excuse to broadly define all criminal activities as a threat to international peace and security. We do not agree with attempts to address these issues in the Security Council, which is not empowered by the Charter to operate in this area.

That is why we insist that transnational organized crime must be addressed through reciprocal, mutual cooperation and not through international military measures that a small group of nations could implement selectively and in a biased way. We warn therefore of the risk that the fight against transnational organized crime could be used as a pretext to subjugate nations and impose measures that violate their sovereignty. That is why we reiterate that this issue should remain under the consideration of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the Economic and Social Council and the Conference of Parties to the Palermo Convention, in accordance with relevant current practice and bilateral agreements.

Regarding the review mechanism of the Convention, we consider it premature to talk about implementation because responses by countries to the questionnaires and the verification list are still at an early stage. The most appropriate solution at this time would be to improve the data collection methodology in order to have more complete information on the implementation of the instrument by each State. Only when the problems stemming from implementation have been identified can the Conference of the Parties focus on assessing the need for a review mechanism.

In conclusion, the Bolivarian Government firmly believes that transnational organized crime must be fought by means of effective international cooperation. To that end, all States must fulfil their obligations and responsibilities under the Convention, in keeping with the principles of the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in internal affairs. Here, it is appropriate to recall that these principles are clearly set out in article 4 of the Palermo Convention.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Ms. Marion Walsh, Director of the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of Ireland.

Ms. Walsh (Ireland): I refer to the statement made earlier by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union, which my delegation fully endorses. I wish to add a short statement on the issues that are of particular relevance to Ireland.

It is my privilege to inform the Assembly that Ireland has now implemented all of the mandatory requirements of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo

Convention — and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Ireland has today deposited the instruments of ratification and is now a State party to the Convention and the trafficking Protocol.

We have all witnessed the increasing scale and complexity of criminal activity in each of our jurisdictions over time. We have also witnessed the increasing sophistication of the criminal community as they use cybercrime and other technological advances to facilitate their activities.

As other speakers have said, transnational organized crime represents a threat to the internal security of each State and of each region represented here today. As other speakers have also said, the rule of law must prevail. For it to do so, the legitimate law enforcement authorities of the State must match the speed with which criminals adapt their activities to avoid the rule of law.

It is well recognized that most criminal activity has a cross-border element to it. That is why the Palermo Convention and its Protocols are so important. There must be no safe havens. To succeed, we must use all of the resources available to us to tackle the issues together. These instruments provide an international framework for doing just that.

In Ireland, we recognize that there is a continuous need to improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas such as information and intelligence exchange, mutual legal assistance and the confiscation and seizure of the proceeds of crime. The Convention is succeeding in raising global awareness in all of these areas as we head towards universal ratification and adherence.

Ireland also wishes to acknowledge the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Convention for signature. We see this occasion as an important milestone, and we congratulate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on its achievements over the past 10 years. We also note the growing number of State parties. Like our European Union partners, we believe that the Convention is now moving into a new phase. The next Conference of the Parties will turn its attention to looking at the establishment of an implementation review mechanism. Ireland fully supports an open and transparent mechanism and will participate fully in that process.

In Ireland we are no strangers to transnational organized crime in all its forms. The island of Ireland is on the western edge of Europe. Sixteen per cent of the European Union's territorial waters are within the Irish economic zone. Ireland has nearly 6,000 kilometres of coastline. Those statistics clearly show the problems that having such an extensive coastal border can pose to a small country like Ireland.

Consequently, the illicit drugs trade has not bypassed Ireland. Like most other States here, we have suffered through disastrous societal damage, the associated violence and intimidation and gangland crime. That being said, our law enforcement authorities are implementing a targeted intelligence-led strategy to address this. We have witnessed a number of significant seizures and prosecutions in recent years.

Ireland has introduced tough new legislation to deal with the threat posed by organized crime. One of the effects of that legislation has been that many of the most dangerous and powerful Irish criminals have moved abroad to avoid the rigours of the new laws. We must strive to continually improve information exchange and intelligence, so that we do not merely displace our criminals to jurisdictions with weaker laws. We will work with all States parties to the Convention to ensure that there is no hiding place for such criminality.

As well as the tough new legislation, our Criminal Assets Bureau continues to target the ill-gotten gains of organized crime gangs. The Bureau has been in existence since 1996 and is widely respected globally. It has succeeded in seriously disrupting the activities of organized crime gangs in Ireland and has taken back hundreds of millions of euros that were the proceeds of crime and corruption.

Turning to trafficking in human beings, human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery, which has no place in a civilized society. Ireland is primarily a destination country for trafficking victims. While the numbers involved are small, we firmly believe that even one victim is one too many. The Irish Government has taken a very firm stand against trafficking in human beings. Our aim is to make Ireland a more hostile environment for those who might consider trafficking people into, out of or within our jurisdiction.

Our response has been developed rapidly over the past couple of years. We now have a strong legislative

framework in place to tackle this crime. Last year we published our first national action plan to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, which is the blueprint for the State's response to the issue. The Irish Government recognizes the importance of international cooperation in preventing and combating this crime. We welcome the opportunity provided by our ratification of the Protocol to further strengthen our participation in the international effort to combat organized crime gangs that make significant profits from the vulnerability of others.

I shall conclude by reminding delegations that Ireland's commitment to tackling transnational organized crime in all its forms is resolute. We recognize that we will not defeat international criminal organizations by acting alone. The crime is transnational; our response must also be transnational. It is only by working together that we will succeed. We in Ireland will play our part.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mr. Sirisak Tiyapan, Director-General of the International Affairs Department of the Office of the Attorney-General of Thailand.

Mr. Tiyapan (Thailand): Allow me at the outset to extend my delegation's appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting of the Assembly on transnational organized crime, as well as for convening the very valuable and informative panel discussion held this morning. In that regard, my delegation also extends its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly and Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for their statements earlier today. We are grateful too for the insightful contributions of the panellists and the excellent stewardship of the panel discussion by Under-Secretary-General Antonio Maria Costa.

Like many other States, Thailand has long experienced the threat of transnational organized crime and has been utilized by criminal groups operating across borders as a country of origin, transit and destination for their illegal activities and illicit gains, as well as a safe haven for criminal groups wishing to conceal themselves from law enforcement. We have noted with growing concern that narcotics trafficking, trafficking in women and children and the illegal smuggling of firearms have intensified and are increasingly accompanied by several other equally severe criminal activities, including trafficking in persons, money laundering, the production and use of fraudulent documents, organized corruption and financial, economic and organized high-tech crimes.

Thailand is cognizant of the increasing magnitude of the impact of transnational crime on national security and public welfare in particular, and on development as a whole. Thailand therefore is mindful that the severe ramifications of the current global economic and financial crisis for the persistent socio-economic challenges faced by our country will increasingly push people to turn to crime. Therefore, we have firmly put in place efforts to combat transnational organized crime in all its forms and manifestations as one of the top priorities on the national agenda.

In that connection, concerted efforts among the agencies concerned, including law enforcement and judicial authorities, as well as between the Government and the private sector, are strongly encouraged, with a view to achieving the most comprehensive and effective mechanisms and measures against transnational organized crime. We have spared no effort to develop and promote such measures to encompass both the areas of prevention and suppression and those of capacity-building and international cooperation.

Thailand has adopted and revised many of its laws to ensure proactive measures against transnational crime, not only focusing efforts on further developing modern investigation techniques but also placing emphasis on confiscating the proceeds of crime in order to target criminals and their organizations. Most recently, important revisions to the Narcotics Offenders Suppression Act were made to extend jurisdiction to cover drug trafficking committed outside the territory of Thailand, institutionalize the offence of conspiracy and establish an office with the authority to examine assets, enabling it to carry out inquiries and seize and order the forfeiture of money, property and any other assets that are the proceeds of drug trafficking.

The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, which is an important milestone in Thailand's anti-trafficking efforts, was adopted in 2008. It established a national anti-trafficking committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, and set in motion an effective national structure that mobilized all sectors of society in a holistic and coordinated manner to address and combat organized trafficking in persons. That structure

includes important victim-centred provisions for remedies for both national and foreign victims of trafficking.

Thailand has also spared no effort to cooperate with the United Nations and the international community in combating transnational organized crime in all its forms in the best manner possible. In 2005, Thailand received the great honour of hosting the eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, under the theme "Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice", where the Bangkok Declaration was adopted as a set of best international commitments and guidelines for the fight against transnational organized crime. In addition, we have also cooperated with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on many specific projects, as well as in hosting several regional preparatory meetings, including the preparatory meeting in advance of the first-ever global Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking.

At the regional level, as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand has endorsed numerous ASEAN declarations and instruments established to combat transnational organized crime in our region. Thailand is also a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, which is an associate member of the Financial Action Task Force as well as a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units. We are also a member of the International Association of Prosecutors, an organization that places the utmost importance on encouraging prosecutors around the world to cooperate with one another in fighting against transnational organized crime.

On the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and as one of its signatory countries, Thailand expresses its firm support for the Convention, its universal ratification and successful implementation. In this regard, it is our strong desire to ratify the Convention at the earliest opportunity upon the necessary revisions and adoptions of national laws and regulations to ensure the harmonization of our domestic laws with international instruments. We are committed to speeding up this process of review and parliamentary approval and look forward to the day when we can join other States parties in our common endeavours.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jamaica.

Mr. Blake (Jamaica): My delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In addition, I should like to use this opportunity to make a complementary statement from our national perspective.

As we gather to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, we are faced with a grave reality and with concern at the impact of transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, narcotic drugs and small arms and light weapons, as they continue to hamper our development and undermine peace and security.

Transnational organized crime is a global phenomenon that impacts every country and every region. We therefore encourage collective responses to this global scourge and call upon the international community to continue to support the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its efforts to enhance the capacity of affected States to combat a broad range of criminal activity addressed by the Convention, including money laundering, corruption, piracy, trafficking in persons and crimes related to narcotics. We emphasize that the efforts of the UNODC should include, but not be limited to, assisting Member States in creating effective law enforcement responses, strengthening their judicial capacity and providing technical assistance.

As a small island developing State, Jamaica continues to grapple with the negative effects of transnational organized crime, which are endangering the well-being of our people. Indeed, recent events in our nation's capital, Kingston, have underscored a pertinent fact: that easy access to small arms and light weapons and the illicit wealth generated from transnational organized crime — in particular narcotics trafficking — promote conflict, accelerate violence, increase the activities of organized crime and, in many instances, threaten to undermine the authority of the State as well as our socio-economic development. They have also highlighted the increasing vulnerability of States to such crimes.

Our Minister of National Security continues to work assiduously to implement a comprehensive policy agenda in line with national security objectives.

Concrete responses to the challenges posed by transnational organized crime include a number of legislative measures, the most recent of which are our criminal justice plea-bargaining regulations and the Financial Investigations Division Act. A number of solutions which will take into account further legislative proposals are currently under consideration by the Government, including an organized crime act, among other proposals.

Despite the challenges of crime, our security forces are committed to the task at hand and have restructured, upgraded and equipped the Transnational Crime and Narcotics Division to provide a formidable force to disrupt and reduce all trafficking-related offences. A financial crimes unit was established to investigate financial crimes and to apply the Proceeds of Crime Act to deprive criminals of their ill-gotten assets: an important development in local law enforcement. Additionally, gang leaders have been arrested as a means of tackling organized crime.

One of the many and varied ways in which those engaged in transnational organized criminal activities have managed to exploit a great number of small developing States like Jamaica with impunity has been through our relatively open and moderately secure borders. Considerable efforts have therefore been made to strengthen port and border security. However, Jamaica and, indeed, our CARICOM partners continue to face significant challenges given the porous nature of our borders — land, air and sea — which has unwittingly facilitated, to a large extent, the transborder movement of criminal commodities. Active collaboration and the assistance of our regional and international partners are therefore critical in our fight to develop and implement effective border security methods, practices and procedures.

At the regional level, Jamaica continues to participate meaningfully with our CARICOM partners in efforts to address the crime and security agenda through the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and the Council of Ministers responsible for national security and law enforcement.

Jamaica also joins its CARICOM partners in reiterating the urgent call for the reopening of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Barbados. It is ironic and unfortunate that the UNODC is not present in our region, which, unfortunately, has become recognized as having the highest incidence of gun-related violence in the world.

Finally, we appreciate efforts over the past week to work towards an outcome for this meeting. We regret, however, that agreement could not be reached on the text of a political declaration. In our view, an expression of political commitment would have been an important outcome as the United Nations commemorates this important anniversary of the Convention.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): My delegation is honoured to participate in this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on transnational organized crime. As the facilitator of the biennial draft resolution of the Third Committee on trafficking in women and girls and as a State party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention — and to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, the Philippines takes pride in doing its part in the international collective effort and in sharing responsibility in addressing the root causes of the problem of transnational organized crime.

The Philippines continues to be at the forefront in the fight against transnational organized crime by fully implementing our legislation on money laundering, asset recovery, terrorism, violence against migrants and trafficking in persons. With the amendments to our Anti-Money-Laundering Act of 2001, our system has been at par with international standards. Our Anti-Money-Laundering Council is one of seven new members of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units.

On terrorism, my delegation believes that international cooperation is needed to ensure that terrorists do not take advantage of weaknesses and loopholes in law enforcement, and to enable proper judicial cooperation in prosecuting terrorists. With our Human Security Act of 2007, we have now criminalized terrorism and terrorist financing. The Anti-Terrorism Council that was created under our laws, is mandated to formulate and adopt comprehensive anti-terrorism plans, programmes and counter-measures to suppress and eradicate terrorism in our country and to protect people from acts of terrorism.

On violence against migrants, with the amendments to the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, we have improved the standard of protection and the promotion of the welfare of migrant workers, their families and overseas Filipinos in distress. The amendments, among other things, expanded the scope of illegal recruitment to include reprocessing workers through job orders that pertain to non-existent work. It also mandated the Government to monitor international conventions and to ratify those whose aims would ensure the protection of Filipino workers abroad.

On trafficking in persons, many developing countries are hard pressed when confronting the issue with minimal available resources to prevent this crime. In that regard, international cooperation and the sharing of viable and practical solutions to solve the problem remain crucial. Human trafficking remains the third largest organized criminal activity. The Philippines therefore fully supports a global plan of action against human trafficking. Negotiations on such a plan are being facilitated by the Ambassadors of Portugal and Cape Verde.

With updates to the Philippines Anti-Trafficking-in-Persons Act of 2003, the buying and selling of human organs has been strictly prohibited. We also have a six-year strategic plan of action against trafficking that, among other things, involves a centre for the protection of women and children, a national referral system for the recovery and reintegration of trafficked persons, an anti-trafficking-in-persons database, the production of several manuals on law enforcement and the prosecution of cases and a half-way home programme, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, to provide temporary shelter for trafficked victims.

My delegation views with much concern the fact that no receiving Western country has ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. That Convention asks that receiving States give migrant workers equal treatment and a minimum degree of human rights protection. The Philippines provides the full range of protections for victims of illegal recruitment and trafficking and ensures that victims of trafficking and of violence against migrant workers are treated as victims of human rights violations, and not as accomplices to trafficking or migration activities. We urge other countries, particularly receiving States, to do the same. Trafficked victims, especially migrant workers, should be treated as victims of human rights violations. In order to contribute meaningfully to stemming the tide of human trafficking, those who traffic and those who use or benefit from the services of traffickers must equally be prosecuted.

The Philippine Government regards the menace posed by organized crime as one of the major obstacles in the country's quest for peace and progress. Following the spate of activity by organized crime in our country and in other parts of the world, the Philippine Government has endeavoured to make positive efforts towards effective and efficient police actions against the menace. All components of the Philippine criminal justice system — law enforcement, prosecution, judicial process, corrections, and the community — act together in pursuit of the common goal of eradicating transnational organized crime. But there are quite a number of constraints, including the lack of investigative skills, a penchant for soliciting or offering political patronage, the lack of modern and appropriate forensic tools and the vast financial resources at the disposal of rogue elements.

Transnational crime is of common concern and calls for both domestic and international action. An international framework for law enforcement cooperation should complement or supplement measures within national jurisdictional boundaries so that a holistic anti-transnational-crime agenda can be promoted. That will invariably mean the strengthening of international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice. It will also require universal adherence to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. I wish to add that the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families should be of paramount importance to all of us in order to complement the global regime against transnational organized crime.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting.

The representative of Ukraine has asked to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second

intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): Since it mentions Ukraine directly, I would like to refer to the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) entitled "The globalization of crime: a transnational organized crime threat assessment", which was launched today.

It was with deep disappointment and indignation that we read section 2, entitled "From Eastern Europe to the world", of chapter 6, which deals with arms supplies. It is unfortunate that the integrity of such a long document is compromised by a mere five pages. In reading that section, one might reasonably wonder whether it was drafted outside the body that presented the report. That is evident from the commercial and business-driven nature of unverified information hand-picked from the mass media.

We categorically reject the singling out of any United Nations Member State as a principal source of the problem, be it Ukraine or another country — a pattern that the Executive Director of UNODC has so readily embraced since the Security Council debate on the arms trade in Central Africa (see S/PV.6288). It is unprofessional at a minimum, let alone inconsistent with the norms of impartiality and objectivity that international servants — especially those with the rank of Under-Secretary-General — are supposed to be guided by.

Ukraine's trade in arms with legal Governments, including in Africa, is in full conformity with international law. United Nations groups of experts on the Sudan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries, with which the Ukrainian side is working in an open and transparent manner, have not provided any official conclusions regarding the alleged involvement in the illegal arms trade.

Ukraine is taking all necessary measures to prevent violations of United Nations sanctions. Our national export-control system, which has been in effect since the mid-1990s, is recognized by leading experts as one of the most effective in the world. Just a week ago, Kyiv hosted the eleventh annual International Export Control Conference, at which more than 70 countries were represented, the largest number ever for that forum.

Today Ukraine is the only former country of the Soviet Union that is a member of all existing international export control regimes. During the very years mentioned in the report, the competent authorities of Ukraine successfully prevented numerous attempts by foreign individuals to smuggle arms from Ukraine using false documents. My country also provides full information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and other international organizations on a regular basis.

Ukraine has always stressed that documents such as the aforementioned report should be prepared exclusively by experts in their respective fields. The issue of arms control and the evaluation of national export control systems go far beyond the scope of UNODC. Those issues are rightly being tackled in the specialized international export-control forums, where Ukraine is an active participant.

Against this backdrop, the following questions logically arise. Which sources of information and documents were used by the Office when preparing the part of the report concerning Ukraine? Did UNODC request and receive assessments from the respective sanctions committees and groups of experts that would have proven the illicit activity of Ukraine in the regions and countries mentioned in the report? Did UNODC officially approach the Governments it mentioned, including Ukraine, for verification and confirmation of the relevant facts so as to use them responsibly?

Relying on information from open sources in such a sensitive sphere cannot be justified — unless, of course, there is another agenda. We deliberately are not disclosing the motivation for such a biased approach. Yet we realize that creation of a distorted picture of Ukraine on the international arms market is designed to please some other actors.

To conclude, I would like to stress once again that none of the examples given in the report proves the violation by my country of its international obligations. Moreover, some facts are simply falsified. We will distribute a full version of our statement, in which the facts will be found.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.